

## Gaming machine with multi scatter game

### **Field of the Invention**

This invention relates to a gaming machine. More particularly, the  
5 invention relates to a gaming machine and to an improvement to a game  
played on such a gaming machine.

### **Background to the Invention**

Players who regularly play gaming machines quickly tire of particular  
10 games and therefore it is necessary for manufacturers of these machines to  
develop innovative game features which add interest to the games. In so  
doing, it is hoped to keep players amused and therefore willing to continue  
playing the games as well as to attract new players.

Also, with the growth that has occurred in the gaming machine market,  
15 there is intense competition between manufacturers to supply various  
existing and new venues. When selecting a supplier of gaming machines, the  
operator of a venue will often pay close attention to the popularity of various  
games with their patrons. Therefore, gaming machine manufacturers are  
keen to devise games and/or game features which are popular with the  
20 players as a mechanism for improving sales, retaining customers and  
attracting new customers.

### **Summary of the Invention**

According to the invention, there is provided a gaming machine having  
25 a display means and a game control means arranged to control images  
displayed on the display means, the game control means being arranged to  
play a game wherein at least one random event is caused to be displayed on  
the display means and, if a predefined winning event occurs, the machine  
awards a prize, the gaming machine being characterized in that the display  
30 means displays a plurality of spinning reels, each reel carrying symbols from  
a set of symbols, one of the symbols of the set being a scatter symbol and, in  
respect of at least one of the reels, the set comprising more than one  
occurrence of the scatter symbol, the scatter symbols on said at least one reel  
being arranged on the reel so that more than one scatter symbol is able to be  
35 displayed simultaneously when the reels are in a rest condition and, when  
more than a minimum number of scatter symbols are displayed at any one

time, all the displayed scatter symbols contributing to a single paying combination of the scatter symbols.

The display means may be a video display unit and the display of the reels may be constituted by a video simulation of spinning reels.

5 It will be appreciated that, to achieve a winning combination, a predetermined number of the symbols must be displayed. Normally, at least three symbols constitute a winning combination. Hence, the minimum number of the scatter symbols which must be displayed to constitute a winning combination may be three scatter symbols.

10 The set of symbols on each of the reels may have more than one occurrence of the scatter symbol. Preferably, the set of symbols of each reel has at least two scatter symbols. The scatter symbols may be positioned on each reel such that up to three scatter symbols are able to be displayed together at any one time. Hence, for a five reel video simulation, a maximum  
15 of fifteen scatter symbols may be able to be displayed at once to constitute a fifteen of a kind winning combination.

### **Brief Description of the Drawings**

The invention is now described by way of example with reference to  
20 the accompanying diagrammatic drawings in which:-

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of a gaming machine, in accordance with the invention;

Figure 2 shows a block diagram of a control circuit of the gaming machine;

25 Figure 3 shows a table of reel strips for a game to be played on the gaming machine of Figure 1;

Figure 4 shows a first example of a screen display the game; and

Figure 5 shows a second example of a screen display of the game.

### **Detailed Description of the Drawings**

30 In Figure 1, reference numeral 10 generally designates a gaming machine, including a game, in accordance with the invention. The machine 10 includes a console 12 having a video display unit 14 on which a game 16 is played, in use. The game 16 is a spinning reel game which simulates the  
35 rotation of a number of spinning reels 18.

5       The machine 10 includes a top box 26 on which artwork 28 is carried.  
The artwork 28 includes paytables, details of bonus awards, etc.

Referring now to Figure 2 of the drawings, a control means or control circuit 40 is illustrated. A program which implements the game and user interface is run on a processor 42 of the control circuit 40. The processor 42 forms part of a controller 44 which drives the screen of the video display unit 14 and which receives input signals from sensors 46. The sensors 46 include sensors associated with the bank 22 of buttons and touch sensors associated with the screen 16. The controller 44 also receives input pulses from the mechanism 24 indicating that a player has provided sufficient credit to commence playing. The mechanism 24 may, instead of the coin input chute 24.1 or the bill collector 24.2, or in addition thereto, be a credit card reader (not shown) or any other type of validation device.

As indicated above, the game 16 is a spinning reel game which simulates the rotation of a number of spinning reels 18. The controller 44 contains, in a memory (not shown), data relating to reel strips. Each position on the reel strip maps to a corresponding position on the reel 18 to be displayed. The controller 44 selects random locations of the reel strips which map to the positions at which the reels 18 will stop.

Consequently, it is possible for both scatter symbols 52 on each reel 18  
35 to be visible simultaneously in a screen display 54 (Figure 4) if the relevant  
reel 18 stops in the appropriate position.

However, with scatter symbols, the appearance of a predetermined number of the scatter symbols, anywhere on the screen 16, results in a winning combination. In other words, scatter symbols need not appear on 10 active paylines to be eligible to contribute to a winning combination.

The reel strips 50 are set up in such a way so as to allow for two or  
25 more scatter symbols to be displayed simultaneously on the screen 16 in  
respect of each reel 18. When this occurs, each scatter symbol contributes to  
a single paying winning combination of scatter symbols.

In the example of the game shown in Figure 4 of the drawings, it is assumed that the reels 18 stop at positions 5, 4, 16, 9 and 5 of the reel strips 50 to generate the screen display shown in Figure 4 of the drawings. This embodiment will pay a prize for five scatter symbols.

Hence, it is an advantage of the invention that a game is provided  
5 which can pay a prize for more scatter symbols than there are reels.

10 be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.